



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### **Editor's Note:**

**The BCWRT monthly meeting is moving to the Parkville, VFW, 8123 Harford Rd. The meeting on April 13, 2010 will be the first at the new location.**

### **B&O Railroad Museum Seeks Civil War Artifacts for Loan**

In the Spring of 2011, the B&O Railroad Museum will open a major exhibition to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Civil War. Focused on the personalities, engagements and role of regional railroads (Baltimore & Ohio; Northern Central; Western Maryland; Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore, Cumberland Valley and others) the exhibition will feature the largest assembled collection of Civil War locomotives and rolling stock in the World.

Small artifacts, archival and photographic materials related to specific battles, personalities, locations and military units are sought for a 5-year revolving exhibit that will change for each year of the War. ALL LOANS WILL BE FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 14 MONTHS.

The B&O Railroad Museum is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. The Museum has announced that noted author and historian Daniel Carroll Toomey will be the Guest Curator for the exhibition.

Loaned objects will be insured for replacement value and cared for at the highest museum standards. Credit (if desired) will be given to the

owner of all loaned objects, images and archival material.

In the case of archival and photographic materials, we seek high resolution digital copies and not original documents or photographs.

For further information or to inquire about loaning objects contact:

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### **Virginia governor amends Confederate history proclamation to include slavery**

By Anita Kumar, Washington Post, April 8, 2010

RICHMOND -- After a barrage of nationwide criticism for excluding slavery from his Confederate History Month proclamation, Virginia Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R) on Wednesday conceded that it was "a major omission" and amended the document to acknowledge the state's complicated past.

A day earlier, McDonnell said he left out any reference to slavery in the original seven-paragraph proclamation because he wanted to include issues he thought were most "significant" to Virginia. He also said the document was designed to promote tourism in the state, which next year marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

However, Wednesday afternoon the governor issued a mea culpa for the document's exclusion of slavery. "The proclamation issued by this Office designating April as Confederate History Month contained a major omission," McDonnell said in a statement. "The failure to include any reference to slavery was a mistake, and for that I apologize to any fellow

Virginian who has been offended or disappointed."

McDonnell also called the nation's first elected black governor, L. Douglas Wilder (D) of Virginia, and the chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, Del. Kenneth Cooper Alexander (D-Norfolk), to apologize after they said they were offended by the document. McDonnell told them that he would alter the proclamation to include slavery and acknowledge that it was the cause of the Civil War.

The original declaration called on Virginians to "understand the sacrifices of the Confederate leaders, soldiers and citizens during the period of the Civil War." McDonnell added language to the document that said slavery "was an evil and inhumane practice that deprived people of their God-given inalienable rights and all Virginians are thankful for its permanent eradication from our borders."

But his decision to declare April Confederate History Month continued to cause a firestorm Wednesday, with national media descending on Richmond and Democrats and African Americans accusing the new governor of ignoring the state's role in slavery.

Sheila Johnson, one of McDonnell's most prominent black supporters and the wealthy co-founder of Black Entertainment Television, condemned the proclamation, calling it "insensitive" to Virginia's complicated and painful history.

"If Virginians are to celebrate their 'shared history,' as this proclamation suggests, then the whole truth of this history must be recognized and not evaded," said Johnson, who participated in a political ad for McDonnell's gubernatorial bid last fall and headlined several fundraisers



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during his campaign against Democrat R. Creigh Deeds.

McDonnell revived a controversy that had been dormant for years. Confederate History Month was started by Gov. George Allen (R) in 1997. Allen's successor, James S. Gilmore III (R), included anti-slavery language in his proclamation.

In 2002, Mark R. Warner, Gilmore's successor, broke with their actions, calling such proclamations a "lightning rod" that did not help bridge divisions between whites and blacks in Virginia. Four years later, Gov. Timothy M. Kaine was asked to issue a proclamation but did not.

This year's proclamation was requested by the Sons of Confederate Veterans. A representative of the group said it has known since it interviewed McDonnell when he was running for attorney general in 2005 that he was likely to respond differently than Warner and Kaine.

Brag Bowling, a national board member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, said his organization supported adding language about slavery to the proclamation.

"Governor McDonnell is taking some really unnecessary heat for this," he said. "Most of it is coming from his political opposition. . . . If this helps him with his opposition, then we support him."

### Historian reunites abolitionist's gun with museum

By Marylynne Pitz, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 31, 2010

Robert Hassinger bid farewell on Tuesday to an old friend, a revolver whose craftsmanship, hallmarks and engraving led him on a fascinating quest and fed his lifelong passion for American history.

"I like to do research," said the retired insurance investigator, who returned an 1851 Colt "Navy" revolver to the Chicago museum from which it was stolen 62 years ago.

Inside the third-floor board room of Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum in Oakland, he donned a pair of white gloves and carefully removed the gleaming revolver from a brown valise.



An 1851 Colt "Navy" revolver once owned by abolitionist Owen Brown.

"There's no pitting, no rust," Mr. Hassinger, 83, said as he showed it to Libby Mahoney, chief curator of the Chicago History Museum, who was visibly impressed by its excellent condition.

"I can't really believe that it's resurfaced. You're an extremely honest person," said Kathleen Plourd, the museum's collections director.

At a gun show here in 1991, Mr. Hassinger traded an 1860 Army revolver for the earlier 1851 Colt model because its low serial number piqued his interest. He began researching its history, accumulating information in a neat binder.

While paging through *Man at Arms* magazine in 2001, the North Hills man read an article headlined "John Brown's Colt Navies."

John Brown, a zealous abolitionist, led an ill-conceived raid in 1859 on a U.S. military arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Va. Afterward, he was tried and

hanged. Three of his sons also died in the anti-slavery movement.

But Brown's third son, Owen, escaped from Harpers Ferry, fleeing to Canada and later returning to the United States. The article reported that Owen Brown's gun, stolen in 1948 from the Chicago History Museum, remained missing and had a serial number of 43156.

Mr. Hassinger knew his Colt revolver bore the initials O.B. on its backstrap. He figured the initials were those of the soldier who used the gun but was never able to match the letters to anyone, even after examining regiment rosters.

As he matched the serial number to his revolver, he was electrified by the realization that he held Owen Brown's gun in his hand. Now, he faced a dilemma.

"I didn't know what to do," he said.

Mr. Hassinger consulted Ronald J. Erhart, a lawyer he knew from the Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Roundtable, who contacted the Chicago History Museum. He got no response.

"Maybe they were afraid I was after some money. I wanted some proof that it was stolen," Mr. Hassinger said. "No claim was made to the insurance company because they thought the gun wasn't worth anything."

Mr. Hassinger then consulted Mike Kraus, curator of Soldiers & Sailors. A collector of Civil War artifacts since boyhood, Mr. Kraus believes the revolver is worth between \$100,000 and \$250,000. Through colleagues, Mr. Kraus reached Ms. Mahoney, Chicago History Museum's chief curator.

"She was very interested in talking to me, especially when she heard the phrase, 'Owen Brown's pistol,'" Mr. Kraus recalled.



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Ms. Mahoney sent documents showing the Chicago Historical Society accepted the revolver in the 1920s from Frank Logan, a collector of John Brown and Abraham Lincoln memorabilia. The packet included a newspaper account of the gun's theft. That proof satisfied Mr. Hassinger.

"I realized that it belonged to them and that it had to go back," he said. But that didn't make it any easier for him to let go of his crown jewel.

"This is what makes me want to get up in the morning. I would love to own this, display it and give talks on it. It's a symbol of the development of this country," Mr. Hassinger said.

Collectors, he said, don't really own their artifacts. "We are just custodians of them during our lifetime."

He's sad because Chicago History Museum officials "couldn't guarantee that it would go on display." They also declined to reimburse him for the costs he incurred in acquiring and insuring the gun.

Mr. Hassinger has a theory on how the revolver wound up in Owen Brown's hands. His father purchased a number of Navy revolvers while living in Lawrence, Kan., from 1856-58. Owen Brown joined his father there, participating in conflicts to prevent that state from becoming a slave state. Kansas joined the Union as a free state in 1861.

"The soldier it was issued to may have lost it or may have deserted and sold it," Mr. Hassinger said, adding that the Army rarely recorded which guns were issued to specific soldiers. Or, in 1856, Owen Brown may have fought with a member of the U.S. Army at a Kansas town called Black Jack, and taken the gun from a soldier there. Black Jack is about 20 miles south of Lawrence, the scene of bloody skirmishes over slavery.

The right side of the gun's grip bears the initials of Robert Henry Kirkwood Whiteley, who headed the arsenal on Governor's Island in New York. His stamp meant that the gun had passed inspection and authorized payment for it.

Some time after 1859, Owen Brown returned from Canada to be near his sister, Ruth Brown Thompson, who lived in California. After he died in January 1889, his sister sold weapons that belonged to him and his father to Mr. Logan, who donated the weapons to the Chicago Historical Society.

"Stolen property remains stolen property," said Mr. Erhart. "He could have sold it to somebody in the black market. He understood that he had a duty to return it to the rightful owner."

### **Revolver believed to have belonged to Confederate spy Belle Boyd auctioned for \$8,000**

By JOSEPH DEINLEIN, York Daily Record/Sunday News, March 30, 2010

A .31-caliber, five-shot Allen & Wheelock revolver with ivory grips and a customized wooden case sold for \$8,000 at an auction on Sunday, all on the assumption it might have belonged to one of the Civil War's most well-known spies.

The firearm some believe belonged to Belle Boyd, of Martinsburg, W.Va., was sold to a private collector in Chambersburg, said Patrick E. Redding, firearms manager of Redding Auction Service outside Gettysburg.

The ivory grip of the pistol is inscribed with Boyd's name. And it came in a wooden case with a silver medallion on the lid, engraved with the name

"Belle." There are also two tintype photographs inside that very well could be Boyd.

Redding, whose auction house holds about 25 specialty fire arms auctions a year, said he was somewhat surprised the weapon went for as much as it did.

"The gun definitely needed more research done with it," he said. "But it was a unique situation. It did a little better than we expected."

The revolver came from the estate of a Frederick, Md., man who was something of a hermit, Redding said in previous interviews. And because he was not able to contact any family, the provenance of the gun - authentication it belonged to Boyd - was not definitive.

But that didn't stop some from believing the gun was the real McCoy. In fact, a representative from the Belle Boyd House in Martinsburg, which maintains a museum of Civil War artifacts, came to bid on it, but to no avail.

Born in 1843 or 1844, depending on the source, Maria Isabelle "Belle" Boyd operated a spy ring for the Confederacy from her father's hotel.

She reportedly provided information to generals Turner Ashby and "Stonewall" Jackson during the 1862 campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, at times riding to across enemy lines.

Captured and released at least three times, she eventually married and went to England, where she became an actress and published "Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison."

She eventually returned to the United States and gave dramatic lectures on her time as a Civil War spy, according to several historical sources.

Boyd died in Wisconsin in 1900.



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### Confederate Heritage group Kicks Off Equal Recognition Campaign For Harvard's Confederate Dead

CAMBRIDGE, MA –SLRC press release, March 5, 2010

The Southern Leadership Resource Council announced today a campaign to obtain equal recognition for the 71 Harvard graduates who died serving the Confederacy.

The country's oldest seat of higher learning, since 1636 the gold standard for academic excellence and purveyor to the nation of presidents, ambassadors, distinguished scientists and jurists, captains of industry, etc., etc., is the principal icon of the New England Puritan intellectual tradition in America. Dedicated to the Harvard dead of all wars, its Memorial Church boasts, on the wall of the south transept, 28 white marble tablets inscribed with the names of 136 Harvard men who fought and died while serving in the Union Army.

But what of the 71 Harvard graduates who died wearing the gray? Harvard's Confederate dead include Confederate general Ben Hardin Helm, who was Abraham Lincoln's half-brother-in-law; States' Rights Gist, one of the five Confederate generals killed at Franklin; and Lt. Col. Charles LeDoux Elgee, Chief of Staff to another Harvard alum, Lt. Gen. "Dick" Taylor, son of President Zachary Taylor.

Not that the matter hasn't been discussed. Way back in 1988, Mason Hammond, a Harvard emeritus professor, suggested placing a Confederate memorial in Memorial Hall – not Memorial Church – which, he pointed out, "is rather a Valhalla of

Harvard's past than specifically a commemoration of the Union side of the Civil War." Such a project, Hammond said, would be "a long overdue act of *pietas*" [*Lat.: sense of duty; kindness; piety*] that would "recognize that Harvard's dead on the Confederate side gave their lives for a cause in which they selflessly believed." Hammond's proposal was either ignored or vilified.

In 1995, when Memorial Church was being renovated, the Harvard Alumni Association actually proposed a Confederate memorial and the idea was even supported by Memorial Church's minister; however, according to a 2003 *Harvard Crimson* article, that idea was shot down by the Harvard Black Law Students' Association, the undergraduate Black Students' Association and the University's then-president, Neil L. Rudenstine. In 2006, multimedia artist Brian Knep put together a digital presentation he called "Deep Wounds" which involved projecting the names of Harvard's Union dead onto the floor of Memorial Hall. The website "Big Red & Shiny" reported that Knep "originally wanted to list the names of Harvard's Confederate Civil War dead," but said the Boston *Globe* reported that Harvard's Office for the Arts thought that would be "too controversial."

### Court rules former Cyclorama center can stay

Frederick News Post, April 05, 2010

Gettysburg is well-known for battles, and they haven't ended with the Civil War.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Thomas F. Hogan ruled in favor of those wanting to keep the Cyclorama Center, which in the past housed a massive circular painting depicting

Pickett's Charge. The center was built 50 years ago by the world-famous architect Richard Neutra. Neutra's son, Dion, also an architect, said the center was "way up" on his late father's list of the most significant buildings he designed.

According to The Philadelphia Inquirer, the National Park Service announced in 1999 that it wanted to move the painting to a new home and tear down the building, which sits in the middle of the battle line where Union soldiers defended Cemetery Ridge on the third day of the Gettysburg battle.

Last year, the original visitor center was demolished as well as a parking lot next to the Cyclorama Center. The Park Service planned to restore the area to reflect what it looked like in 1863 when it was known as Ziegler's Grove.

The plans sparked a war between Civil War purists and those in favor of preserving buildings that are considered architectural gems. The Inquirer pointed out that this controversy comes just as plans are being revived for a casino at a conference center a few miles southeast of the town. Many will no doubt remember the way Gettysburg was divided on that hot issue.

Jason Hart, a Boston architect, defended keeping the Cyclorama Center, telling The Inquirer that "it has great architectural significance." His firm has come up with a number of design possibilities to save all or part of the building.

Dion Neutra said he watched his father's creation deteriorate and wants to be part of a revitalization, saying that his father had a "broader vision for the building" than just a place to house the giant painting.

"He wanted to commemorate the Gettysburg Address, as opposed to



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just commemorating the battle," he said. "The idea was for a monument to address the notion of reconciliation as Lincoln had tried to do in the Gettysburg Address. We could do that in a dynamic way today."

### **Gettysburg zoning allows hundreds of homes**

By TIM PRUDENTE, Hanover Evening Sun, March 14, 2010

The sale of the Gettysburg Country Club is scheduled to close by the end of the month. While the property is zoned residential, word is still out what the land could be shaped into, but the builder has said it is unlikely to remain a country club. (Evening Sun File Photo)

The site's 120 acres - which saw significant action during the Battle of Gettysburg - are zoned as residential, which would allow up to 3.5 housing units per developable acre. That doesn't mean 420 houses could be built there, zoning officials say, because some of the acreage will be allotted for infrastructure and open-space requirements.

Still, rules would allow more than 3.5 units on some acres because of the township's "cluster" zoning provision. The provision allows for a greater density of dwellings in proportion to "open space," which can take the shape of ponds and waterways.

"It's basically condensed housing," said Bill Neagle, a zoning officer with the township. "I know there's a big pond on the back of the property and when you have open space like that it's hard to say how many houses could go up."

The sale of the location is expected to be completed on March 30 to Woodhaven Building and Development Inc., and the company's president Martin K.P. Hill has said

that it's "very unlikely" the site remain a country club.

Cumberland Township officials are awaiting the release of a development plan by Woodhaven, which would shed light on the number of developable acres and, in turn, potential units.

"From our standpoint we don't know a thing until they release a plan," Neagle said. "A whole lot of things go into a plan, like water management and roads. It's all very intense."

Even as the deal nears, preservationists say they'd like to see the site - which lies within the boundaries of the national battlefield - avoid development.

As a golf course, the grounds have remained free of development, if not exactly like they were in 1863. But the identity has been enough to satisfy historical societies who were unable to match the asking-price of \$2.79 million when the site went to a sheriff's auction in 2008. Earlier that year, Susquehanna Bank foreclosed on the property and, after the auction failed to attract a single bid, the bank claimed ownership.

Katie Lawhon, a spokeswoman for the park, declined comment on the sale, stating that land-acquisition efforts are confidential. Although, she added, "It's a high priority for us to acquire some kind of protection. It's significant to the battle of Gettysburg which literally makes it a national treasure ... our goal is to protect the property."

The Civil War Preservation Trust has also expressed interest in the site and spokeswoman Mary Koik commented, "Right now, we're still very interested in the club ... we certainly hate to see residential development of that intensity on any historic land."

The club was added to the Gettysburg National Military Park in 1990 after congressional legislation expanded the park's boundaries. The location was where Confederate commander Gen. James Archer was captured by the famed Iron Brigade on July 1, 1863, a day when more than 1,000 soldiers died on, and nearby, the country-club grounds.

Although the preservation of the land may appear in jeopardy, the foundering economy has raised questions regarding development of the site.

"With the economy we're having right now, who's to say they wouldn't leave it a golf course for a while," said Neagle, noting the high cost of construction. "I'm open to leave it a golf course ... I'm a golfer," he added.

### **Student Is Accused of Stealing and Selling Valuable Historic Letters**

By ALISON LEIGH COWAN, New York Times, March 15, 2010

William John Scott is a freshman at Drew University. He studies political science. He plays defense on the lacrosse team. He describes himself on Facebook as a night person who likes to party.

But federal prosecutors say he is something else: a busy archives thief who stole famous letters written by a founder of the United Methodist Church and world leaders, including Abraham Lincoln and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.

Mr. Scott pilfered the letters while working part time at the university archives, the prosecutors said. He sold some of them for thousands of dollars, and left others sitting in a dresser drawer, where F.B.I. agents found them after executing a search



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warrant of his dorm room on Saturday.

Mr. Scott was arrested on Sunday as the bus bringing his lacrosse team back from spring break rolled into Drew's campus in Madison, N.J.

He was charged with one count of knowingly stealing an object of cultural heritage from a museum. He faces as much as 10 years in prison, if convicted.

The judge authorized an unsecured \$50,000 bond, on the condition that he surrender his passport and agree to be supervised by pretrial services while remaining in the custody of his parents, who live in Longmeadow, Mass.

Founded as a Methodist seminary in 1867, Drew has many important papers that shed light on the origins of the Methodist church and the Wesley brothers, who helped found it. According to federal prosecutors, Mr. Scott got a job in the archives in late October and was given a key to a storage room containing many documents considered too rare to share openly. Typical letters from John and Charles Wesley, for instance, can fetch \$5,000 to \$12,000 apiece on the market, according to the complaint.

The university became suspicious, according to an account provided by prosecutors, after an antiques dealer in England alerted officials in its library that he had been approached by someone offering to sell him original letters from the Wesleys. Ten of the letters arrived on March 3, via FedEx, according to the complaint, with two suffering some damage in transit.

After a quick search of its archives, the university estimated that 21 to 23 of its Wesley letters appeared to be missing and contacted the F.B.I. The missing lot included a valuable letter,

worth more than \$5,000, from John Wesley to a friend and supporter, George Merryweather, dated Dec. 20, 1766.

After combing through Mr. Scott's dorm room, federal agents discovered a file containing six Wesley letters besides the ones that were sent to England. The file also contained roughly 11 other important and historical documents from the university archives, including letters from five United States presidents: Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, William McKinley, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The file also had letters belonging to the university from Richard Nixon when he was vice president, Robert F. Kennedy and Madame Chiang.

### **Wanted: One Civil War cannonball**

By Barrett J. Brunsman, Cincinnati Enquirer, April 6, 2010

The Cincinnati Observatory would be delighted to display a cannonball from anybody who has one left over from the Civil War.

Surplus iron cannonballs were used as ball bearings to rotate the original cupola atop the observatory built in Hyde Park in 1873, said Dean Regas, outreach astronomer. A slot in the cupola allowed the telescope inside to be focused on celestial objects. The rotation mechanism was replaced after about 20 years, and it's unclear what happened to the cannonballs.

While it might be possible to get a reproduction cannonball, "we would like an authentic one - just to show what rotated the dome," Regas said. Observatory staff have been on the lookout for a cannonball for at least a decade. "They're on eBay every once in a while, but we always get outbid," Regas said. "They go for \$100 or

\$200 - sometimes more. We have a limited budget here."

The Cincinnati Observatory had the second-largest refracting telescope in the world when it opened atop Mount Adams on April 14, 1845. In the 1860s, smoke from industries at the foot of the hill rendered Mount Adams unsuitable for continued astronomical research at what was the nation's first major observatory. "The telescope moved out here in 1873," Regas said. "The only part of the building that came out was the cornerstone."



Surplus iron cannonballs were used as ball bearings to rotate the original cupola atop the Cincinnati Observatory built in Hyde Park in 1873, says Dean Regas, outreach astronomer.

Astronomers think it would be nice to display a vintage cannonball along with a copy of the Hyde Park observatory's blueprints, which show how the cannonball system worked in the building designed by renowned architect Samuel Hannaford.

"We believe that the cannonballs at the observatory were 6.4 inches in diameter, weighing 32 pounds," Regas said.

The observatory would gladly recognize the donor in any display, said Craig Niemi, executive director. To donate a Civil War era cannonball, call the Cincinnati Observatory at 513-321-5186 or e-mail [deanobservatory@zoomtown.com](mailto:deanobservatory@zoomtown.com).



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### Group hopes to preserve Ulysses S. Grant's last refuge

By ANN MARIE FRENCH, The  
Saratogian, March 29, 2010

WILTON — Mount McGregor is well known as being home to a correctional facility but is often forgotten as being an important landmark in history. It was atop Mount McGregor that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president of the United States, spent the last six weeks of his life before succumbing to throat cancer.

It was June 1885 when Grant left his New York City home for a cottage in Saratoga County. Already given his cancer diagnosis and the grim outlook of imminent death that came with it, Grant was determined to complete his memoirs as a means to provide financial security for his family. Grant had been ruined financially when a junior business partner embezzled the invested capital.

The cottage was owned by Joseph W. Drexel, who offered it to the former president as a place to spend his last days. On the good days, Grant sat on the cottage's front porch or was wheeled to an overlook for views of the upper Hudson and lower Champlain valleys, the Green Mountains, the Berkshires and the Taghkanic Hills. On bad days, Grant would remain in bed, looking out a nearby window at the same view. Today there is no view from the cottage — trees have grown up to block it. But visitors can walk to the overlook and see the same vista, albeit with more development than Grant could ever have imagined in his day. Drexel's cottage still stands in good structural shape but needs a multitude of repairs. The sun, wind

and weather have damaged the building's exterior. The trim is weathered, the paint is peeling and the chimney is just beginning to separate from the side. "Nobody has kept their eye on this," said Lance Ingmire, the president of the Friends of Ulysses S. Grant Cottage. "We cannot let our historic sites fall apart just because of mismanagement of money at the state level."

The inside of the cottage remains identical to when Grant took his last breath there on July 23, 1885. Family members stopped the clock then, leaving the bed, his clothing, and other personal effects just as they were when he was alive. Ingmire said there is repair work to be done inside as well. His own interest in Grant and the historical site is deeply personal. Ingmire said one of his ancestors served as the conductor, bringing Grant's body from the mountain. The family has a piece of cloth that draped the casket and Ingmire possesses a photo of a healthy Grant on the steps of the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs, said to be Grant's initial introduction to the local area. Ingmire, well-known for his organization of the fall Civil War encampments, has only been involved with the Friends of Ulysses S. Grant Cottage for about a year. Asked to give a speech at an annual meeting, Ingmire was soon approached about taking on a more active role with the organization. He has responded with zest, embarking on a campaign of public education and fundraising to have the cottage repaired and maintained in the way it should have been all along. Additionally, he has high hopes for making some much needed and important changes to the visitor's

center associated with Grant's cottage.

While the cottage is completely controlled by the state Department of Parks and Recreation, the visitor's center is under complete control of the Friends organization. The building itself is an old garage donated to the Friends by the state Department of Corrections a number of years ago. Ingmire is currently working with the Department of Parks and Recreation, which also controls the surrounding property, to conduct an engineering study related to a severe drainage problem on the site.

Ingmire said drainage on the site is inadequate, resulting in water pooling on the floor of the visitor's center. At times of heavy rain, the water reaches a height of 2 inches and flows through the center.



The elements have chipped away at the paint on the south side of the Ulysses S. Grant Cottage. (ERICA MILLER/The Saratogian)

"This takes away from what we want to give to the visitors," Ingmire said. While tours are conducted at the



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cottage, the details of Grant's life and death are found in the visitor's center. Ingmire said the center is a place where visitors can take their time to view videos, read documents and see displays that will provide additional details not covered in the cottage tour.

Ingmire said there are a number of local people, himself included, who would like to offer their personal collections for public display at the visitor's center but are prohibited from doing so because of the conditions of the center.

While the engineering study will likely be completed by the Department of Parks and Recreation, any repairs or construction to the center will be funded by the Friends organization. The organization works with an annual budget of about \$40,000, most of which is paid out as salaries for the site interpreter, tour guides and gift shop staff.

To learn more about the historic site and its needs, go to [www.grantcottage.org](http://www.grantcottage.org). The site provides a brief chronology of Grant's life and information on how to offer donations or become a member of the organization.

### **Specter, Casey, Platts ask Congress to expand Gettysburg Park boundaries**

By Laura Vecsey, York Patriot News,  
March 24, 2010

U.S. Sens. Arlen Specter and Bob Casey introduced legislation Wednesday to incorporate two historically significant properties into the boundary of Gettysburg National Military Park.

The two properties include the Lincoln Train Station and 45 acres of land at the southern end of Gettysburg battlefield.

"This legislation will help preserve land that is historically significant and important to telling the story of the Battle of Gettysburg," Specter said. "The Civil War was a defining moment for our nation, and we ought to take steps necessary to preserve historical assets for the benefit of current and future generations." Casey said that by incorporating the Lincoln Train Station and the land at the southern end of the battlefield into the park, "we can ensure that these historically significant locations are preserved for generations to come."

U.S. Rep. Todd Platts has introduced companion legislation in the House. The lawmakers say the expansion effort is consistent with Gettysburg National Military Park's 1999 General Management Plan, the goals of the National Park Service and is supported by the Gettysburg Borough Council.

### **Superintendent accidentally discharges muzzleloader in class**

By ROB ROGERS, Billings (Montana)  
Gazette, March 8, 2010

Dwain Haggard's high school history lesson on Friday backfired.

Haggard, who used to be a Civil War reenactor, was showing the five students in Reed Point High's American history class his replica antique black powder muzzleloader



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when the gun fired and lodged a ball in the front wall of the classroom.

"I can't explain how it was loaded," Haggard said.

Haggard has been district superintendent since 2007, and each year he's visited the high school's American history class to show off his Civil War-era equipment. When he shows the muzzleloader, he finishes the demonstration by firing a cap, which makes a small "pop" when he pulls the trigger, he said.

But this time, "when I dropped the hammer on it, to all of our surprise, it went off," he said.

Jake Bare, a junior at Reed Point High, was in the class when the gun fired. He said it caught everybody off guard.

When Haggard pulled the trigger, there was a loud bang, and the room filled with smoke, Bare said.

"Holy criminy, you just shot the map," he said.

Indeed, the ball shot through the "o" in the word "North" at the top of the map and lodged in the wall, Haggard said.

The gun was never pointed at the students once Haggard inserted the cap. He was facing away from the students, pointing the gun toward the ceiling when he pulled the trigger.

The students were "never really in danger," he said.

### **International Museum of Spiritual Investigations opens in Gettysburg**

By LARRY ALEXANDER, Lancaster Intelligencer Journal. March 29, 2010  
International Museum of Spiritual Investigations opens in Gettysburg  
Chris Williams, at the International Museum of Spiritual Investigations in Gettysburg, points to an image he witnessed in Pitman, N.J. His friend, Tim Archut, snapped the photo.

Jonathan Williams knew that if he was going to open a museum dedicated to ghostly apparitions and paranormal phenomena, there would be no better place than what might be the most haunted town in America — Gettysburg.

That's why he, his cousin Chris Williams and friends Brandy Cecil and Christina Barnett have founded the International Museum of Spiritual Investigations.

Located at 231 Baltimore St. in a 185-year-old house that survived the three-day Civil War battle, the museum opened in early March.

"About 10 years ago, Chris and I started coming here annually to research paranormal activity," said Williams, who moved to Gettysburg from New Jersey five years ago. "About a year ago, we decided to create a place to gather in all this evidence, so we decided to start a museum."

Small but growing, the museum features three rooms displaying photos, videos and even ghostly voices.

The United States Room focuses on sightings and people who have played a prominent role in spiritualism in America. Included is the story of the spiritualist community of Lily Dale, N.Y., which formed in the mid-19th century. It also features the story of William Mumler, whose camera work, Williams said, was "pretty much the birth of spiritual photography."

Accused of being a fraud by no one less than showman P.T. Barnum (Mumler was tried and acquitted), his work became world-famous. Of special note was his portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln, seated, with the ghostly figure of her slain husband touching her shoulder.

Among other works in this room is a recent photo by a Civil War re-

enactor taken without flash on Seminary Ridge. The picture shows apparitions, one appearing to wear a Civil War hat, or kepi, walking through the darkness.

"They counted 14 soldiers crossing the field on Seminary Ridge," Williams said. "It's just one of many unexplained photos."

The International Room showcases mysterious incidents from around the world, including what might be the most well-regarded ghost photo ever taken, that of the "Brown Lady" descending a staircase at Raynham Hall in England in September 1936.

There also is a photo of the Ghost Club, founded in London in 1862, which included such notable members as Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini.

Williams said he is always looking for more paranormal information, whether it's in the form of video, audio or photo, or of weather-related or electromagnetic phenomena.

"Any investigator or any ghost enthusiasts who have collected evidence can come in and donate whatever they can," Williams said.

In the short time the museum has been open, Williams said, he has received one or two pieces of evidence per day.

Williams has had many strange experiences during his 13 years of looking into ghostly doings, including several encounters in the museum itself. He and the others have caught fleeting glimpses of figures and heard voices and footsteps.

"We've had our share of sightings," he said. "Visuals, audio and our names called out, to being touched and tugged."

*The museum currently has limited hours, but starting April 1 it will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday,*



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*Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. Sunday. It is closed Tuesday. The museum also offers paranormal workshops that include hands-on investigations. Admission to the museum is \$4.50 for adults, \$3.50 for people age 7 to 13, \$3 for age 55 and older and \$2.50 for veterans (with identification). The museum Web site is [www.museumofspirits.com](http://www.museumofspirits.com).*